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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00
	NSAE-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
	/000W						

-----A27BEC 220907Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1367

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/BCLTV

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL VM

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH VICE MINISTER BIN ON PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VISIT TO VIETNAM

1. (SBU) AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 22 CALLED ON MFA SENIOR VICE MINISTER BIN TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED VISIT BY PRESIDENT CLINTON. THE AMBASSADOR BEGAN BY THANKING THE VIETNAMESE SIDE FOR ITS COOPERATION AND EXPRESSED THE PRESIDENT'S AND THE FIRST LADY'S SATISFACTION WITH THE VISIT AND THE MEETINGS THEY HAD WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED ONE OF THE MAJOR SUCCESSES OF THE  
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VISIT WAS THE IMAGE OF VIETNAM WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED BACK TO THE U.S. AND AROUND THE WORLD. NO LONGER, HE SAID, COULD PEOPLE PRETEND VIETNAM WAS STILL THE WAY THEY HAD SEEN IT IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES AND EXPECT OTHER PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THEM. VIETNAM'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN AND THE REST OF THE WORLD HAD BEEN ENHANCED BECAUSE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ALSO WERE ABLE TO SEE VIETNAM AND THE U.S. HAD DEVELOPED A RELATIONSHIP WHICH MATCHED THEIR OWN AND THAT VIETNAM WAS NOW IN THE SAME BALLPARK WITH MOST OF ITS ASEAN NEIGHBORS.

2. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR SAID U.S. POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM HAD BEEN GIVEN A NEW DIRECTION BY THE VISIT AND PARTICULARLY NOTED THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT OF THE U.S. TO WORK WITH VIETNAM ON ITS REFORM AND OPENING POLICY. HE NOTED THE U.S. WOULD MAKE ITS SUGGESTIONS, BUT THE PACE AND DECISIONS WOULD ALL BE ONES MADE BY THE VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP. THE U.S., HE SAID, WOULD NOT BE "FORCING" ANY STEPS OR ACTIONS ON THE VIETNAMESE WHICH THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO TAKE ON THEIR OWN. CONTRASTING HIS OWN READING OF U.S. HISTORY WITH THAT OF PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY PHIEU, THE AMBASSADOR DECLARED THE U.S. HAS NEVER HAD "IMPERIALIST" DESIGNS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

3. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR DETAILED A NUMBER OF EVENTS -- THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE WELCOMING CEREMONY, THE OFFICIAL BANQUET AND ENTERTAINMENT, AND THE FAREWELL CALL, AS WELL AS THE MEETINGS -- WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON HAD FOUND VALUABLE AND WELL-ORGANIZED.  
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HE SAID THE PRESIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH PRESIDENT LUONG AND HIS DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISSUES. HE PRAISED THE MEETING WITH PM KHAI FOR ITS FOCUS ON WAYS IN WHICH TO BUILD THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND TO MOVE ECONOMIC ISSUES AND THE BTA INTO GREATER FUTURE FOCUS. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONCERN PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY PHIEU HAD MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADD TO THAT IMAGE OF PROGRESS BY FOCUSING ON AN IDEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF RELATIONS WHICH SUGGESTED HE MIGHT BE PUSHING AWAY THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP WHICH WAS BEING OFFERED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD HEARD LOCAL VIETNAMESE ALSO EXPRESSING SOME DISSATISFACTION WITH THIS IMAGE OF PHIEU BASED ON ITS PORTRAYAL IN THE LOCAL PRESS.

4. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THE VIETNAMESE TO

PROVIDE US WITH MORE INFORMATION ON THE TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN PICKED UP SWIMMING NEAR THE CONTAINER PORT WHICH RESULTED IN THE VIETNAMESE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES DECISION TO MOVE THE APL CONTAINER VESSEL THERE. HE ALSO NOTED HIS PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE ROLE OF LY TONG IN DUMPING LEAFLETS OVER THE CITY AS THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT WAS BEGINNING. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAD ARRESTED HIM FOR HIJACKING AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF HIS BEING PROSECUTED IN THE U.S. AS WELL. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE U.S. HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATTER AND CONDEMNED HIJACKING AS A "DANGEROUS ACT" WHICH SHOULD NOT GO UNPUNISHED.

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15. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED BY COMMENDING VICE MINISTER BIN AND THROUGH HIM ALL OF THE MFA STAFF WHO HAD GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE THIS VISIT SO SUCCESSFUL. HE PARTICULARLY COMMENDED PROTOCOL DIRECTOR LUU FOR HIS GOOD WORK. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT DEPARTED VIETNAM WITH A VERY WARM AND COMFORTABLE FEELING ABOUT VIETNAM AND ITS PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE HAD REACTED WITH A GENUINE SHOW OF ENTHUSIASM AND AFFECTION WHICH DEEPLY TOUCHED ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. TEAM. HE THEN SUGGESTED BIN AND HIS STAFF MEET WITH HIM AND EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN THE COMING WEEKS TO TAKE A LOOK AT NEXT STEPS TO BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP AND TO BETTER DELINEATE VIETNAMESE PRIORITIES.

16. (SBU) VICE MINISTER BIN THANKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR HIS WORDS OF PRAISE AND FOR HIS FRANK ASSESSMENT OF THE VISIT, SAYING HE TOO SHARED MANY OF THESE CONCLUSIONS, ESPECIALLY THAT THE OVERALL VISIT WAS A BIG SUCCESS. IN STOCK FORMULATION, BIN SAID THE VISIT WAS GOOD BECAUSE IT ENHANCED MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES AND THAT IT PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH SIDES TO PLEDGE THEIR COOPERATION ON HEALING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR. CHIDING THE U.S. SIDE BECAUSE OF ITS EFFORTS TO CUT OUT THE FAREWELL AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND TO SIGN BILATERAL AGREEMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE VISIT, BIN SAID "I TOLD YOU WE COULD PROVIDE GOOD CEREMONIES. IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE TWO PRESIDENTS TO WITNESS THE SIGNINGS AND FOR PEOPLE TO SEE THE OFFICIAL FAREWELL."

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17. (SBU) HE URGED THE U.S. SIDE TO PUSH FORWARD WITH RATIFICATION OF THE BTA AND TO PROVIDE VIETNAM WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP VIETNAM MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE AGREEMENT. HE WELCOMED THE U.S. INITIATIVE ON THE ECONOMIC DIALOGUE BUT URGED THE U.S. NOW TO "PROVIDE INSIGHT" INTO THE PROCESS SO VIETNAM MIGHT DESIGNATE THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY CONTACT PERSONS TO WORK ON THIS ISSUE. HE SAID HE HOPED THE NEW S&T AGREEMENT WOULD PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR FURTHER DEEPENING OF SPECIFIC COOPERATION AND SAID HE HOPED THE DIALOGUE ON DIOXINS IN SINGAPORE NEXT WEEK WOULD HAVE GOOD RESULTS. HE REINFORCED VIETNAMESE COMMITMENT TO HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR THROUGH MIA ASSISTANCE TO THE U.S. AND THANKED THE U.S. FOR ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES IN ITS PRESENTATIONS DURING THE VISIT. BIN PRAISED THE U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEMINING ACTIVITIES AND TO PLEDGES REGARDING DETOXIFICATION OF SITES. HE URGED THE U.S. TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SOME "APPROPRIATE FORMS OF ASSISTANCE" FOR VIETNAM, "WHILE WE ARE DOING THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON AGENT ORANGE." ACCORDING TO BIN, PRESIDENT LUONG WAS VERY TOUCHED BY THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE THE U.S. HAD PROVIDED TO HELP VIETNAM TO COPE WITH NATURAL DISASTERS AND WAS PLEASED BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WARNING SYSTEM ASSISTANCE. HE REVEALED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD DECIDED TO COOPERATE WITH THE U.S. AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON A MEETING IN 2001 ON SAFETY FOR CHILDREN. (NOTE: THIS IS THE FIRST FORMAL INDICATION THE VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTER HAS TAKEN THIS ISSUE TO HEART AND HAS MADE IT A NATIONAL COMMITMENT. END NOTE)

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18. (SBU) DISCUSSING THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, BIN SAID PHIEU WAS EXPRESSING THE VIEWS AND POSITIONS OF VIETNAM AS AN "INDEPENDENT" COUNTRY. HE NOTED EACH PERSON HAD HIS OWN "STYLE AND MANNER" AND NOTED THAT PHIEU SPOKE VERY FRANKLY TO THE PRESIDENT IN THEIR MEETING. TRYING TO GIVE THE MEETING CONTENT A MORE POSITIVE SPIN, BIN REMARKED THAT PHIEU HAD INVITED THE PRESIDENT AND HIS FAMILY TO RETURN TO VIETNAM ONCE HE WAS NO LONGER IN OFFICE. HE AGAIN THANKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR HIS ASSESSMENT AND FOR HIS PRAISE OF THE MFA TEAM AND THOSE OF OTHER COLLEAGUES. HE EXTENDED SIMILAR PRAISE TO THE EMBASSY, CONGEN, AND

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL WHO HAD HELPED TO MAKE THE VISIT  
AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENT FOR BOTH SIDES.

19. (SBU) SEPTELS PROVIDE DETAILS ON BIN'S PRESENTATION  
REGARDING LY TONG AND THE TEXT OF A DIPLOMATIC NOTE ON  
THAT SUBJECT.

PETERSON

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